

George Gardner House
8 Pine Street
Nantucket
Nantucket County
Massachusetts

HABS No. MASS-858

HABS
MASS
10-NANT
21-

PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D. C. 20240

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

HABS No. MASS-858

GEORGE GARDNER HOUSE

HABS
MASS.

10-NANT.

21-

Location: 8 Pine Street (on east side of Pine Street, on the corner of Gardners Lane), Nantucket, Massachusetts

Present Owner: Margaret P. Yates (Mrs. Eugene A. Yates)

Present Occupant: Mrs. Yates

Present Use: Seasonal residence

Brief Statement

of Significance: The house is one of the few eighteenth century gambrel roof dwellings on Nantucket and has retained much of its original appearance.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Original and subsequent owners: George Gardner, son of Captain John Gardner, died in 1750, by will leaving his house to his son, Grafton. (Abstract, Lands and Land Owners by Worth). Grafton's son, George, owned it in 1780; he was a Justice of the "Inferior" Court as well as a mariner, and died in 1785 when "something fell from the mast and struck his head."

In 1790 Paul Pinkham, a tailor, bought from the heirs of George Gardner the "west end of the Fish Lot Share which was formerly owned by Grafton Gardner." The property passed from Paul Pinkham to his son, Paul Pinkham Jr., who in 1795 sold it to Christopher Bunker, mariner. Bunker sold it in 1819 to Elizabeth Black, "trader," for \$850.

John Folger, house carpenter, inherited the house from Elizabeth Black in 1831 and held it until his death, when in 1871 his grandsons, Laban A. and Thurston Swain sold it to Phebe M. Swain. A few months later Phebe M. Swain and her husband, Joseph B. Swain, sold it to Mary F. Austin, wife of James Austin. In 1922 the heirs of James Austin sold the property to Sarah Lawrence, from whom it passed to her son, Augustine L. Lawrence.

In October, 1943, Beatrice Lawrence, individually and as guardian of Augustine L. Lawrence, sold the house and land to Margaret P. Yates, owner to date. (Abstract, Nantucket Registry of Deeds Records)

2. Date of erection: About 1750. (Records Registry of Deeds, Nantucket) Nantucket historians have stated that Jethro Gardner built his house in 1748, but this has not been substantiated, nor have any records been found to definitely connect Jethro with this branch of the Gardner family. On the plan of original layouts on the Harbor of Nantucket, Mass. (Registry of Deeds) Jethro Gardner is shown as owning section I, which is land near the corner of Main and Pine Streets and about a block from this house at 8 Pine Street. On the same plan George Gardner is shown as owner of Fish Lot Share 24, at approximately the location of this property.
3. Architect: Unknown.
4. Original plans, construction, etc.: None known. The chief interesting features in the house are the paneling and the kitchen. A tiny fireplace, scarcely two feet across, was used by the family in spring and fall. [Abstract, Scrapbooks of Miss Grace Brown Gardner (microfilm copy in Nantucket Atheneum)]
5. Alterations and additions: The "Pine Room" in the rear was once a shed and still retains some of the small windows. The large fireplace in that room was restored with narrow English bricks which presumably became vari-colored enroute as ballast. (Abstract, Scrapbooks of Miss Grace Brown Gardner). Chimney added at south end in 1940's during remodeling and restoration work.

- B. Historical Events Connected with the Structure: This house on the corner of Pine Street and Gardners Lane was at one time the home of Alexander Gardner, first officer of the whaleship, Awashonks. While at anchor off Baring's Island in the Marshall Group, in 1835, the ship's company was attacked by natives and Gardner was killed, together with Captain Obed Swain and three other Nantucket men, and the ship barely saved from the treacherous natives.

During Nantucket's early history the end of the road on which the house is situated, now Pine Street, was called Hayscale Lane, and marked the western division line of the Fish Lot Shares. Tradition asserts that a platform was placed in the roadway at its most narrow width and that farmers coming into town would weigh their hay there, as well as check on loads of grain being carted from the wharves. (Abstract, Rambling Through The Streets and Lanes of Nantucket by Edouard A. Stackpole)

George Gardner, first owner of the house, married Eunice, daughter of Nathaniel and Mary Starbuck, who lived in the house next door on the south known as "Parliament House." It was there that the Nantucket Monthly Meeting of Friends was launched -- under the leadership of Mary Starbuck. (Abstract, Records Nantucket Historical Association)

C. Sources of Information:

1. Old views: Print of drawing showing part of house and Gardners Lane in Nantucket, the Far-Away Island by William Oliver Stevens, New York, Dodd and Mead and Co., 1936, p. 72; photograph c. 1940 before south chimney added in Ninety-Five Percent Perfect by Everett Uberto Crosby, Nantucket, Inquirer and Mirror Press, 1937.

Prepared by Mrs. Marie M. Coffin
Nantucket, Massachusetts
February, 1965

PART II. PROJECT INFORMATION

These records were prepared for the Historic American Buildings Survey project on Nantucket, Massachusetts. They are part of a continuing HABS comprehensive survey of the early architecture and urban design of Nantucket financed by a grant from the Nantucket Historical Trust.

The project was under the general supervision of James C. Massey, Chief of the Historic American Buildings Survey. Historical information was provided by Mrs. Marie M. Coffin of Nantucket, Massachusetts. Photographs are by Cervin Robinson of Nantucket, Massachusetts. The material was edited for deposit in the Library of Congress by Mrs. Constance Werner Ramirez, July 1971.